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THE  
PHILOLOGIC USES  
OF  
THE CELTIC TONGUE.

A LECTURE

BY

WILLIAM D. GEDDES, M.A.,  
PROFESSOR OF GREEK, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,

TO THE

University Celtic Society.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

ABERDEEN: A. & R. MILNE.

MDCCCLXXIV.

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CLARK'S COURT, 2 UPPERKIRKGATE, ABERDEEN.

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## THE CELTIC TONGUE.

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Two years ago I delivered a lecture to your Society on the Philologic Uses of the Celtic Tongue. The appreciation which it met with, both from the Society and also in other quarters, was such as to encourage me to a further prosecution of the study. The result has been not only the accumulation of a number of interesting observations, but also the deepening, if possible, my sense of the philologic value and linguistic interest of that tongue. This evening I do not think we can bestow to better purpose than to a continuation of the same theme, a further exposition of what has occurred to me as philologically notable in Celtic speech, and I have, therefore, to ask your attention to some of its more suggestive phenomena. Some of the details are possibly too subtle and minute for a general audience, but the interest of the theme must be my excuse if I seem at any time—as I fear I may seem occasionally—obscure.

The materials for such study are greatly multiplying in number and increasing in value. Two great and important works may be referred to in this regard as having appeared since I last addressed you, one the new edition of Zeuss's great work, the "*Grammatica Celtica*," enriched by Ebel's notes, the other the new edition of Curtius's equally great work, the "*Griechische Etymologie*," in which he has added examples from Celtic in his roll of Indo-Germanic tongues. In this, the fourth edition of his work, will be found Celtic examples of roots alongside of Sanskrit, Germanic, Slavonic, and Classic; and Professor Windisch, his fellow-labourer, who contributes the Celtic portion of the work, professes to have brought into array 230 Celtic analoga to the 630 Greek roots treated in Curtius' *Etymology*.\*

\* As an evidence of the interest with which Celtic studies are pursued on German soil, I may mention that in 1872 when I was in Leipzig, and had the honour of making the acquaintance of Professor Windisch, I found him engaged on the study of the *Leabhar na-h Uidhri*, or 'Book of the Dun Cow,' one of the most important books in early Irish Literature. After a little, much to my delight, he took down from his shelves a volume of the splendid Edition of Ossian, published under the auspices of the Marquis of Bute, by our own countryman, the Rev. Archibald Clerk, of Kilmalie. Thus Scottish Gaelic, as well as Irish, comes in for due acknowledgment at the hands of our German friends.

(1)

In the former lecture, some of you may remember I called attention, among other things, to the important light derivable from Gaelic as to practical questions now agitated in the learned world, more especially as to the proper pronunciation of Latin. The view was then advanced that, in regard to the treatment of the letter *c*, Gaelic would be found witnessing strongly for the hard and not the sibilated sound of that letter, and certain proofs were then brought forward. Evidence in the same direction has, I might almost say, come trooping from the same source, showing clearly that at the time when the Latin was the language of the Roman Empire, the ordinary and current pronunciation of the letter *c* was hard, even before the small vowels, *e* and *i*, as well as before *a*, *o*, *u*, the large or broad vowels.

Besides the ecclesiastical term *sagart* for 'priest,' stamping the pronunciation of *sacerdos* when Christianity came in contact with the Celtic races, we have also the parallel term for disciple, *deisciobul*\*, stamping similarly the then pronunciation of *discipulus* as *diskipulus* and not *dissipulus*. It is interesting to note that the Breton dialect of the Celtic, which still holds its ground in the West of Brittany, must have drawn the same word, probably at the same time, from the early teachers of Christianity at the fall of the Western Empire, and, to make the primitive pronunciation clear, the word is written there with *k*, whence the *diskipl* of Breton speech.

Other so-called loan-words point in the same direction. *Car-cair* (a prison) preserves to us the genuine pronunciation of the Roman *carcer*, which the moderns have been inclined to soften in the second syllable, thereby losing much of the grim suggestiveness of its sound. Again, *oifeag* from *officium*,† and *oifeagach*, both with *g* hard, and therefore borrowed long before the period of corruption, probably 1000 years ago, supply parallel evidence to the same effect of a most convincing kind.

Similarly, the juvenile poem of Virgil upon the *midge*, known as the *Culex*, bears a title still current among the Celtic 'race'—*cuileag* (a midge or fly)—whence we may infer that in all its case formations ‡ the *Culex* had the *c* in its end syllable pronounced

\* M'Alpine, in his pronouncing Dictionary, gives us the Gaelic pronunciation of this word—*dyäs-kebul*.

† *an*, the ocean, if from *Oceanus* and *Ωκεανός*, points in the same direc-

‡ form *Culex* occurs much less frequently in the poem than the forms modern English mispronounces, *culicis*, *culici*, &c., but the crude form is the Gaelic *cuileag*.

hard in Gallia Cisalpina, whence Virgil sprang. So although possibly not a loan-word but native to the Gaelic, the word *measg* (to mix, also, mixture) as noun and verb is the cognate of the Latin *misceo*, and should teach us to pronounce it as *miskeo*. It is true the perfect *miscui* retains, even in England, the genuine pronunciation, but the perfect is not the source whence *measg* was drawn, if it was drawn, into the Gaelic, for the present infinitive *miscere* or the imperative *misce* is the probable original, and therefore, I take it, *measg* indicates their primitive and proper pronunciation.

All these, then, *deisciobul*, *oifeag*, *oifeagach*, *carcair*, *cuileag*, *measg*, are traces of the Roman eagle in the days of its might imprinted on the texture of Gaelic speech, and remind one of those geologic impresses treasured up for us in the sandstone strata, telling us of the movements of aquatic birds in antediluvian days. The eagles of Rome have imprinted their talons deeply on European speech, and nowhere are the dints more fresh and clear than in the Gaelic tongue.

The consistency of the Gaelic, in giving the hard sound to *c*, is all the more marked because of the temptations with which it has been surrounded to depart from the rigour of this law. Infusions into Gaelic have come from other tongues, notably from French and English, after these tongues had undergone corruption in this matter, and the Gaelic version of the Scripture bears traces of vacillation, so that we find *Κέδρος* appearing as *seudar*, in imitation of the English pronunciation, but *Καίσαρ* appears as *Cesar*, *Κύπρος* appears as *Ciprus*, though in Gaelic pulpits these and similar words are often Anglicised in the pronunciation. If they are to be Anglicised, we agree with Munro in his Gaelic grammar (p. 33-4) that the spelling with *c* should, in Gaelic, be discarded and *s* substituted, as is done in the case of *seudar* for cedar tree, and *Sesar* in the Irish Bible for *Cesar*.\*

The only *Celtic* word in which I have noted anything like a genuine Gaelic instance of the change is the loan-word *fuirich*, from *παρῳκία*, a *parish*. Here the Gaelic has not been proof against the influence that has so often, in other tongues, modified *c* or *k*, especially before the weak vowel *i*, but though there is a

\* *Seinn* (sing), if it were referable to the same root as *cano*, might appear to some as an exception. But it is no case, for 1st, the Gaelic has a true representative of the Latin *cano*, viz., *can* (sing), and 2nd, Bopp connects the Gaelic *seinn* with *√suan*, whence Latin *sonare*. (Bopp's Compar. Grammar, p. 1086, E. Tr.)

softening of *c* into *ch*, the change falls far short of the reduction to the sound of *s*. In point of fact, the change here appears to take place much as if under Grimm's law, where *tenuēs* (such as *π* and *κ*) come out naturally in the Northern tongues, as *f* and *ch* (guttural).

In pursuing this question, I have come upon an interesting word to which great importance appears to me to be attached. In the San Gallen Manuscript of Priscian, from which Zeuss drew much of his materials as to Celtic, and which forms one of the oldest Celtic documents extant, there appears, as a name for the Alphabet, *Abgitir*, spelled also *apgitir* (no instance apparently of a form *apcitr*). (Gramm. Celt., p. 965.)

Now no one can doubt but that, at the time when this word was framed, the third letter of the alphabet was pronounced *hard*. It is good evidence to prove *that*, but we are inclined to go further and to say that it dates or seems to date from the very remote time when the third letter of the alphabet was pronounced not as a K or C,\* but as a G, just as it is in the Greek alphabet and, as we know, it was originally in the Latin in its early time. It was so, in fact, down to about 231, B.C., when Sp. Carvilius invented the G by making a notch on the original C, and by his ill-considered changes threw the Roman alphabet into confusion. Is it too much to say that we have in this word something issuing out of the very ancient time, when, for what we call *Caius*, the Romans said *Gaius*, and when, in the Latin alphabet, B and D had between them a sister of the same grade as themselves (G), and were not matched, as they are now in the existing Latin alphabet, with a letter of an entirely different grade? It is at all events a very probable supposition, for the letter G was never third in the Roman alphabet, though the sound was so in its early days.

The modern Gaelic name for Alphabet is also curious, but in an entirely other way. It is

*Aibidil,*

in which C, whether as sounded as K, or in remote times as G, has been dropped out altogether. This, we believe, is owing to the perplexing influence exerted by the English alphabet, where the third letter has now got for its name-sound *see*, but the Celt, rather than countenance such a perversion, slurred it over and

\* The pronunciation of C as a K, though ancient, is still an innovation, inasmuch as it breaks up the unity of the Triad (B F D), inserting a *tenuis* between the two medials, B and D.

brought up the letter *d* instead, in order to incorporate a homogeneous and proper title for his Alphabet.

This leads us to remark that the Gaelic Alphabet, even in its present form, bears traces of high antiquity. All western alphabets are of course more or less remotely traceable up to the mother alphabet of the Phœnicians, but Europe may be challenged to produce from her tongues, whether new or old, any one with the features of the mother more fully preserved. I do not refer to the mere figure of the letters, but to their number and array, which recall in a remarkable manner the original Phœnician Syllabarium, and suggest the inquiry whether the Gaelic alphabet did not branch off earlier than the time when the Latin and Greek alphabets assumed their present form and arrangement. These classic alphabets underwent, we know, great changes, and received considerable additions; in particular, the early Greek alphabet, went no further than τ (Tau), and the four last letters of the Greek alphabet (φ, χ, ψ, ω) are known to have been added at a comparatively recent period. Solon wrote his laws without using these characters, and similarly in Latin the letters X, Y, Z are, as Curtius would call them, *hysterogenous*, of later growth, being accretions from the Greek of a later day. The Roman alphabet, now amounting to 23 letters, contained originally, according to Ramshorn, 16 letters, which is the number that Donaldson assigns to the Phœnician or Cadmean Syllabarium.\*

How many does the Gaelic contain? Eighteen, a notable approximation, and further, one of these 18 is now a mere breathing (H), and if we put aside U as probably not differentiated from O in primitive times, we have with these two deductions the primitive number sixteen, and an alphabet, like the Phœnician and Primitive Greek, ending with τ (Tau). The most remarkable circumstance, however, is not so much the aggregate number, as the fact that the Gaelic entirely ignores the *hysterogenous* letters that have been heaped on at the end of the existing Greek and Roman alphabets. The X, Y, Z of the mathematicians are nowhere so expressive as to the Gaelic scholar, for to him they are doubly

\* Compare Donaldson (Cratylus, § 117), who considers the Greek υ to be *hysterogenous*. In the primitive Semitic alphabet there were not separate characters for O and U, one letter doing duty for both. (Cf. King's Horace, p. 393.) Whitney (on Language, p. 265) sets down 15 sounds (3 vowels and 12 consonants) as the complement of articulations which are alone discoverable as belonging in common to the earliest Indo-European speech.

symbols of the unknown. Thus there is *prima facie* evidence for the assertion that there is a close proximity on the part of Gaelic to the admittedly ancient Phœnician Syllabarium, and this view is further strengthened by the fact that the Welsh and the Anglo-Saxon alphabets have done what the Gaelic has not—introduced several of these *hysterogenous* characters, whereas the Gaelic has resisted them, though some of them, such as the Greek  $\chi$ , it might have been found a convenient thing to have incorporated.

While on this subject of the Gaelic alphabet, we may note a curious circumstance, that it contains a letter to which, apart from a partial parallel in Greek, I am not aware of an exact parallel in any tongue. It is a letter which begins no words, heads no vocabulary in the Dictionary, and yet is found everywhere diffused over a Gaelic page. I refer to the letter H,\* of which M'Alpine says, "H, h. This letter is not acknowledged in our alphabet, but to keep the Gaelic in character with us, the Highlanders, who are *the bravest* and *most singular* people in the world (as the *Scots' Times* says), it is used not only in every word, but almost in every syllable expressed or understood."

Is there anything parallel to this anywhere? Nothing that I can adduce, except the similar but not quite parallel case of what has happened in Greek in the development of the *spiritus asper* and *spiritus lenis*. These are, as you know, the ghosts of a vanished consonant, and are now endued with a spiritual presence (in a double sense *spiritual*) inasmuch as every vowel, whether at the beginning or in the middle of a word, is by a sort of fiction held to be entitled to one or other of these breathings. Moreover, the *spiritus asper* ('=*h*) and *spiritus lenis* (') are, as you know, breakings down of the old consonant H, which the Greeks split up into the two breathings, the first part |—becoming by abbreviation ' ; and the second part —| becoming '.

These breathings, descendants of H, are, I need hardly add, characters of wide occurrence, but like the Gaelic H, are without any vocabulary under their command.

The next philological point to which I shall advert is the singular treatment which two letters have received in the Gaelic, one a favourite, the other very much the reverse, and perpetually in danger of being discarded. I refer to the rival letters P and C, the fortunes of which are sufficiently notable.

In looking over the pages of a Gaelic dictionary, it will strike

\* In Welsh, H occurs with a large following of words.

you what a small vocabulary is attached to the one letter, and what a large one to the other. In other tongues these letters are fairly balanced the one against the other. Liddel and Scott gives in Greek the pages of  $\kappa$  as 149, of  $\pi$  as 145; almost an equality. Andrews' Lexicon for Latin gives those of C as 183, and of P as 180. In English, Stormonth's dictionary gives C an area of 64 pages, of P an area of 80, thus giving the preponderance by a certain measure to P. But how does Gaelic hold the balance? C, in M'Alpine, occupies 40 pages, and P comes in for only 6, about one-seventh the area of the other. Even Welsh, notwithstanding its so-called Labialising tendency, does not redress the balance; in the Welsh Dictionary (Dr. Richards, Carmarthen, 1839) C obtains 40 pages, and P is disposed of in 14, about a third of the other, an increase over Gaelic, but still far from equality. Therefore there is a manifest disparity in the treatment of these letters in the Celtic area, and more particularly in the Gaelic subdivision of it. The disparity would probably appear greater than I have stated, for I believe a very large proportion of the words that commence with P are loan-words that have crept into Gaelic, such as—

*paidh* (to pay)

*peacach* (sinner), from Latin *peccator*

and even the renowned *piobaireachd* or pibroch, with all deference to Highland honour, seems to be a variation from English *pipe* and *piper*.

Hence we may be prepared to find in Gaelic great liberties taken with the Labial Tenuis P, so that it is either discarded altogether, or, if retained, is metamorphosed into its rival the guttural, or, as others call it, the Palatal Tenuis (C). Instances of initial P peeled off are such as *athair* \* (father), where Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit confront Gaelic with a P, and the German and Saxon give Gaelic no countenance, as they have, not indeed the P, but the letters (*f*, *v*, or *b*) which they respectively substitute, according to Grimm's law of permutation.

Again, *Iasg* (a fish) has lost a P, as we infer from the Latin *Piscis*, and the Welsh *Pysg*.

*Uircein* or *oircein* (a pig) answers to Latin *Porcus*. *Uchd* (a

\* The Basque, one of the most ancient languages of Europe, keeps Gaelic in countenance in this matter, for it seems to have discarded P similarly in the word for father, viz., *aita*. Cf. Greek *átta*, which may be a Basque or Iberian infusion into Greek, just as the Welsh *Tad* (father) appears in Saxondom everywhere in the well-known form of *Daddy*.

breast) seems to be the Gaelic edition of the Latin *Pect-us*, and Zeuss (p. 990) explains in this way the prefix *iol* or *il*, often used in Irish in composition to express *many* (in Scottish Gaelic = *Ioma*). *Iol*, according to him, is thus for *pīl*, and is the equivalent of *πολυ* (*poly*) of the Greek, and of German *viel*.

In the above instances P initial was followed by a vowel. It is not so remarkable that it should have been lost when it was conjoined with another consonant (L) and so been shuffled off, leaving that liquid letter sole tenant of the position.

*Lan* (full) was primarily *plan*. Cf. *Plenus*.

*Leana* (plain) „ *pleana*. Cf. *Planus*.

The same scaling off of P, especially where conjoined with L, has occurred in Latin itself to a large extent.

*Lanæ* is for *Planæ*. Cf. Greek *πλακ* in *πλάξ*.

*Lātus* „ *Platus*. „ *πλάτος*.

*Linter* (ancient *lunter*) „ *Plinter*. „ *πλυντήρ*.

*Lætus* „ *Plætus*. Cf. Skt. *pṛita* = glad.

In point of fact the falling away of initial P is paralleled by something of the same phenomena in the case of its much stronger brother C.

*Leir* (clear) was primarily *cleir*. Cf. *clarus*.

*Roin* (a hair) „ *croin*. Cf. *crinis*.

*Reic* (sell) has still *creic* in use as a byeform.

Now what account are we to give of this tendency to drop initial P? In the first place the peeling off before a liquid is easily explained by the desire for easy articulation: *Lan* and *Leir* are much more easily uttered than *Plan* and *Cleir*, and 'linguistic laziness,' which was the cause of so many changes, may be supposed to have operated among the Celtic races just as much as among other races. This lightening of two consonants will not explain the extrusion where there is but one consonant, such phenomena for example, as the beheading of  $\sqrt{Pisk}$  of *Pisc-is* into *Iasg* and the like. Another explanation is needed, and the one given by the philologists is such as implies a long duration to Gaelic speech in order to give scope for the trituration and grinding change that have been at work on the texture of it. Schleicher (p. 280) gives the following explanation of the beheading of  $\sqrt{Pisk}$ :—

"Initial P," he says, "falls away in old Erse; that is, it evanesced [by aspiration] in the earlier periods of the languages gradually to Ph, then to F, then to H, and the last then dis-

appeared entirely. Compare Latin *Filius* with its descendant, the Spanish *Hijo*, now pronounced *Iho*: also the Sabine *Fedus* (a kid), Latin *hædus*, also *ædus*; Sabine *Fircus* (a buck), Latin *hircus*, also *ircus*. The disappearance of consonants in consequence of their aspiration is a feature in Erse always recurring in increasing force, but it first appears to have affected this letter P."

We have already seen that the Welsh differs from the Gaelic in cherishing the letter P, and it strikes even casual observers how many of the Welsh family names begin with it, such as Prichard, Price, Pugh, &c. Singularly enough, however, when we come to examine this initial P of the Welsh proper names, when we put it under the philologic microscope, what does it turn out to be? I hardly know a more curious fact in language than this, that the P of these Welsh names is the remnant of the word answering to your Scotch *Mac* as a prefix in Surnames, and that Pritchard is neither more nor less than Mac-Richard, Price is for Mac-Rice, Pugh for Mac-Hugh. For *Mac* comes out in Welsh, by labialising tendency, as *Map*, a Son, which when aspirated becomes *vap* or *vab*, and this *vap* or *vab* evanesces into *ap* or *ab* (cf. the Welsh name Apthomas), and then finally subsides into P of Prichard, and such words as we have named.

Although this letter has in Gaelic come through many changes, it is not the only tongue in which it has been subjected to the hazards of time. In Icelandic, one of the most venerable of our western tongues, it appears with a very slender vocabulary, and a recent lexicographer of Icelandic remarks in his preface, "Probably all words in Icelandic beginning with P are of foreign extraction." (Cleasby in "Icelandic Dictionary.")

The most singular phenomenon under this head is that in the most widely diffused of living tongues apart from English, viz., the Arabic, it is a letter which does not exist at all, and that alphabet and literature are constituted independently of it.

With Icelandic, Arabic, and to a certain extent Latin, to keep it in countenance in this matter, Gaelic has no reason to be ashamed of its treatment of this letter. Rather it is a proof of the hoary antiquity of the tongue which has come down to us,

Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum.

In this regard we may be permitted to recall the words of Horne Tooke:—

"Letters are like soldiers: they are apt to drop off in a long

march." The longer the march, the greater the number of the weak ones that will have dropped away.

Whatever may be thought of Gaelic in the treatment of P, there can be but one opinion as to the robustness it has shown in its adherence to the rival letter C. This, with the sound of K, holds the first rank in strength among all the consonants, and hence Curtius puts it at the head of his vocabulary, in the front of his army of Indo-Germanic Roots. In this he follows the example of the Sanskrit Grammarians, who with admirable instinct, placed it first in their array of consonants.

Now it is remarkable that only the strongest tongues have been faithful to this primary sound, but among them all there is none known to me that has adhered as faithfully as the Gaelic.

Even Sanskrit has shown symptoms of weakness, having frequently allowed an original C- or K-sound to be melted down into a *ç* or *s*, as *e.g.*, the Indo Germanic  $\sqrt{kun}$ , (a dog) appears there as *Çvan*, and so the word answering to the Greek *κάρα* (a head), and Latin *cere-brum* is *Çiras*, with softened pronunciation.

In a similar or rather parallel manner the Greek along with the Welsh, developes a kindred tendency towards getting rid of a k-sound, by substituting for it not a sibilant as in Sanskrit, but a parallel sound of the Labial class; that is to say, admitting a P to come in for a C or K. This wide-spread tendency of the Greek is styled by Curtius *Labialismus*. The tendency in Greek is exemplified in—

|                       |                     |                    |                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| $\lambdaείπω$ ,       | $\epsilon\piομαι$ , | $\epsilon\piπος$ , | $\epsilonνένπω$ , |
| as against the Latin— |                     |                    |                   |
| linquo.               | sequor,             | equns,             | inquam.           |

So in Welsh—

Pen (head), Plant (children), Pren (a tree), Pryf (worm).  
as against the Gaelic—

|        |        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Ceann, | Clann, | Crann, | Crumh. |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|

The following are examples, showing how the Greek and the Welsh have succumbed to this *Labialismus*, whereas the Latin and the Gaelic have resisted and overcome it.

Among the oldest words are the Numerals. Two of these originally began with a guttural tennis, viz., the fourth and fifth Numerals—

| K-sound retained. |         | P-sound substituted. |                                                                |
|-------------------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Latin.            | Gaelic. | Welsh.               | Greek.                                                         |
| quatuor           | ceithir | pedwar               | $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\upsilon\pi\epsilon\varsigma$ (Aeolic) |
| quinque           | coig    | pump                 | $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\epsilon$ (Aeolic)                   |

If the Greek has labialised so far as that the most Archaic form of it viz., the Aeolic, has not escaped the affection, it is not to be wondered at that the later Greek of Attic went further and dentalised, changing *πίσupes* further into *τέσσαupes* and *πέμups* by partial dentalism into *πένups*.

Observe however the firmness of the Gaelic in this matter. It not only retains the guttural tenuis in its primitive place as Latin also does, but it does so in a braver, more independent way than Latin, inasmuch as Latin has allowed a parasitic letter to creep in, viz., *u* after the K-sound, quatuor and quinque. Even the Sanskrit falls short of the ancient features here preserved by Gaelic: *four* is there *chatvaras*, *five* is *pancha*, showing labialismus partially developed and a repeated softening of the K sound.

Not less striking is the proof derived from a class of words as old as the Numerals—the Interrogative stem with its widespread ramifications—

| K-sound retained. |         | P-sound substituted. |                |
|-------------------|---------|----------------------|----------------|
| Latin.            | Gaelic. | Welsh.               | Greek.         |
| quis?             | co?     | pa                   | πίς? for which |
| quo?              | cia?    |                      | τίς            |
| quando?           | ciod?   |                      | cf. πῶς (how?) |
|                   | coca?   |                      |                |

Here again the same phenomena recur in precisely the same fashion. The Greek not only labialises but goes further and dentalises, *τίς* here being parallel to *τέσσαupes* yonder. The Greek however retains in one dialect a remembrance of the primitive K-sound; for in the Ionic of Herodotus, *κῶς*, *κόθεν*, *κοίος* and the like hold their ground, even after *τίς* has come to command the general company of interrogations to which they belong.

On the other hand the Latin and Gaelic adhere to the K-sound but with a difference; the Latin falters and sometimes drops it as in *ubi*, *uter*, &c., for *cubi*, *cuter*, or admits the crutch of a parasitic letter *u* after the K-sound. The Gaelic holds bravely on, without such aid, *co* being just as old and primitive as the Sanskrit *kas* (who?). Even the variation by which the minor interrogative forms *cia* (which?) and *ciod* (what?) appear with a weaker vowel, seems to be identical with the change in the Sanskrit neuter, where the weak vowel *i* similarly appears, the Sanskrit Interrogative being thus declined in the nominative—

| Mas.       | Fem.      | Neuter.    |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| <i>Kas</i> | <i>Kā</i> | <i>Kim</i> |

which is analogous to the Latin—

*quis quæ quid?*

and therefore parallel to the Gaelic—

*co co ciad?*

The strength of the Gaelic is further evinced in this matter by the firmness with which it adheres to K-sound, even after desertion by the Latin. In the word for *cough*, the K-sound is preserved in Sanskrit, Gaelic, and Lithuanian, while Welsh and Greek labialise, and its old friend the Latin dentalises.

| K-sound preserved. |              |                | P-sound substit. |              | T-sound substit. |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| SKT.               | GAELIC.      | LITHUANIAN.    | WELSH.           | GREEK.       | LATIN.           |
| <i>kâs</i>         | <i>casad</i> | <i>kostu</i> * | <i>pâs</i>       | <i>βήξ</i> † | <i>tus-sis</i>   |

Nay, such is the pertinacity of the Gaelic in fondness for the K-sound, that it not only adheres to it wherever it had any place originally, but has “wrongously” introduced it into words where it had no proper business at the first, and where not only other tongues, but even Sanskrit and Latin refuse to follow it. The clearest proof is derived from the treatment in Gaelic of certain words, regarding whose origin we are as certain as we can be of any historic fact. There are two terms of Christian festivals, which are as surely Greek in origin as the New Testament itself, and these in Greek open with a P. I refer to *πάσχα* (Passover or Easter) and *πεντηκοστή* (Pentecost or Whitsunday). What form has the Gaelic given to them? It has made both of them open with a K-sound, *casg* being Easter, and *caingis* Whitsunday. Similar, and almost as strong evidence is derivable from other loan-words, such as *purpura* which the Gaelic brings out as *corcor* (crimson), and *ποινή* or *pœna* (a fine), which the Gaelic brings out as *cain*. These are infusions from other tongues, but what are we to say of the Gaelic form of a primitive word, in which it takes a K-sound as against the *Labialismus* of apparently all other Aryan tongues? The word for *foot* in Gaelic is *cas*, against the Greek *ποὺς*, against the Sanskrit *padas*, and even against the Latin *pes*.‡

But it may be asked, “why do you attach so much importance to this fact? It may be granted that Gaelic delights in K-sounds, what is the proof that this is an indication of strength?”

\* The Lowland Scotch *host* (= cough) is cognate to *kostu*, *kâs* &c., as *horn* to *cornu* &c., by Grimm's Law.

† Garnett (Philol. Soc., Vol. I., p. 146) considers *βήξ* to be the Greek edition of this root.

‡ In the Seventh Numeral the Gaelic takes *ach* as against the P of the classic tongues: *ch* of *seachd* = p of *ἑπτά*, *septem*, and Sanskrit *saptan*.

The question is a legitimate one, but it is one that can be answered satisfactorily. I take in the first place the statement of the highest philological authority in our day, Dr. Curtius of Leipzig, and how does he state the matter? In explaining the genesis of Labialismus he has the following comprehensive remarks (Griech. Etymol., II., p. 45):—

“K is of all consonants the most difficult to pronounce; it requires, in order to be preserved in purity, the most decided articulation. Hence it comes that very frequently involuntary companion-sounds (Mitlaute) attach themselves to it and particularly the sounds *v* (i.e. *w*) and *j* (i.e. *y*). These companion-sounds might be likened to Parasitic plants; for just as these fasten on other plants, endangering their growth, and in the end often killing them outright, so these companion-sounds produce a variety of changes in the sounds to which they cleave, and often destroy them entirely. Thus *k* became *kv*, then *p*; so again *k* became *kj* or *ky*, Sanskrit *k̐*, in later pronunciation *tsch*, and at last sometimes it comes to *t*.”

That is his explanation of Labialismus and Dentalismus, and it puts the conservative attitude of Gaelic toward K-sounds in a clear and brilliant light.

Again, Schleicher (p. 312) throws out the idea that we have in the presence or absence of Labialismus a scale for measuring faithfulness to ancient form.

Lithuanian he considers to preserve in this point features older than Slavonic, Latin than Oscan and Umbrian, and Gaelic and Irish than the sister Welsh—because of their resistance to the labialising tendency.

A minor proof in the same direction is the steadiness with which Gaelic adheres to K-sound initials, in circumstances where not only the English but also the Latin has shown feebleness and dropped it in the pronunciation. I refer to initial *cn*. In English the *c* or *k* is dropped in sound though retained in the spelling, as in *knee*, *knot*, *knife*, and so on, where *k* is silent, and perhaps it may be a survival of Celtic influence in Scotland that preserves in such words in the Scotch vernacular the old pronunciation. Regarding Latin, it is curious that *cn* was not used by them in the ‘Anlaut’\* or initial at all, and even *gn* was always liable to be

\* Curtius Gr. Etym. I. p. 208 :—The strength of Gaelic in retaining *cn* in the anlaut, is paralleled by its boldness in using *sr* as an initial sound. It seems to be the only Indo-Germanic tongue of Europe that does so. Sanskrit, however, keeps it in countenance in this as in many other features.

reduced to *n*, as *gnavus*, *gnosco*, and *gnascor* became *navus*, *nosco*, and *nascor*, precisely as if we were to write *knife*, *knout*, &c., as *nife*, *not*, &c., without a *k*.

While dealing with initial *cn*, it is worthy of note that many of the Highlanders introduce a change, but it is not a change that affects the *c* but the *n*. In words like *cnoc* a hill, the pronunciation is frequently as if it were with an *r*, *croc*. Is there any parallel to illustrate this change? It is curious that the same fate occasionally happens to *n* in similar circumstances in classic speech. The phrase *not a whit*, in Greek οὐδὲ γρῦ, appears also as οὐδὲ κρῦ, which last from Gaelic analogy is probably the original. Likewise, it is perhaps a Celtic feature in Latin that the Romans in taking the Greek κνέφας (darkness) pronounced it κρέφας, and hence their *creperus* (murky) and *crepusculum* (dimness of twilight); also the Greek γνῶμων they metamorphosed into *gromon* (Curt. Gr. Et. II. 275) whence their *groma*, a measuring rod, and their *Gromatici*, or writers on land-measuring by means of the *Groma*.

In pursuing these gleanings in the department of orthography and pronunciation, we have been only as yet lingering around the alphabet. It is time to advance to the more important, though scarcely more interesting, region of Grammar.

The first point to which I shall advert is the subject of case-inflection. We discussed, on a former occasion, the most salient feature in this respect, of Gaelic noun-declension, viz., the *ibh* of the Dative Plural with its classic analogies. I proceed to deal with a more subtle feature, in which new analogies strike us, where we might at first sight least expect them.

Many of you may have observed in Latin Declension the resemblance in form that subsists between two cases not seemingly in any close logical relation, the Genitive Singular and the Nominative Plural—

|                          |   | Gen. Sing.   | Nom. Pl.                    |
|--------------------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|
| In the First Declension, |   | Pennæ        | Pennæ.                      |
| „ Second                 | „ | Domini       | Domini.                     |
| „ Third                  | „ | Avis         | Aves (in acc. may be avis.) |
| „ Fourth                 | „ | Fructus      | Fructus.                    |
| „ Fifth                  | „ | Dies (as in  | Dies.                       |
|                          |   | Dies-piter.) |                             |

Here we have a cluster of correspondences in three out of five sions quite complete, and in the remaining two declensions ly complete.

Is there anything parallel in Gaelic declension? What do we find to be the relation there between these two cases, the Genitive Singular and the Nominative Plural? Why, we find in all nouns that have not the Plural in *a* or *an*, just the same phenomenon as in Latin, an identity between these two cases. Hence, Munro in his Gaelic Grammar (p. 38) lays it down as a law:

“The Nominative Plural in Gaelic is either *like the Genitive Singular*, or it ends in *a* or *an*.”

That is, the genuine Gaelic declension, where it has not taken the Germanic plural ending *an* or *a* (*a* being an abbreviation of the other form), in other words, has not germanised, presents the same parallelism as Latin declension does between the pair of cases in question.

|                                                 |              |                |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|                                                 | Gen. Sing.   | Nom. Pl.       |
| Thus from <i>Dàn</i> (a poem) comes <i>Dàin</i> | <i>Dàin</i>  | <i>Dàin</i> .  |
| „ <i>Càrn</i> (a cairn) „ <i>Ouirn</i>          | <i>Ouirn</i> | <i>Ouirn</i> . |
| „ <i>Each</i> (a horse) „ <i>Eich</i>           | <i>Eich</i>  | <i>Eich</i> .  |

Therefore if *equus* is the equation of *each*, *equi* (Latin, Gen. Sing. and Nom. Pl.), is the equation of *eich* (Gaelic, Gen. Sing. and Nom. Pl.).

That is to say, the *i* of the Latin termination of *equi* has in Gaelic been subjected to the process known as *hyperthesis*, whereby that vowel is often found appearing in the syllable immediately preceding that to which it naturally belongs. In Greek this process is very familiar, *μέλαινα* being for *μελάν-ια*, which for *μελαν-γα*; *σωτήρα* for *σωτέρ-ια*, which for *σωτερ-γα*; *τείνω* is for *τεν-ίω* which for *τεν-γω*, &c. These analogies justify us in making the above equation, since *equus* = *each*, *equi* = *eich*.

Compare now the statement of Donaldson in the New Cratylus (p. 409), where he is discussing the formation of the Latin and Greek Nominative Plural in the vowel declensions, or what we know as the First and Second Declensions, and where he is seeking to account for their divergence from the Sanskrit Nom. Pl., which ends in *as*, and from the Nom. Pl. of the consonant declension which ends in *es*.

He there observes, “For this plural ending (viz., *as* of Sanskrit), we generally find *es* in Greek. In the first and second declensions, however, the [actually existing] Nominative Plural is *a* or *oi* [*τιμ-αί ἱππ-οί*]. It is nearly demonstrable that the final *i* in these instances as well as in Latin has supplanted an original *s*,\* a remark which applies also to the Latin Genitives of the First

\* Compare the Italian *noi* and *voi*, which can thus be explained by a similar treatment of the *s* of the Latin *nos* and *vos*.

*Declension*, thus for *familiæ*, *familiai*, the common forms [of the Genitive], we have also *familiâs* = *familiais*."

This philologist, therefore, discerned in partial glimpses that philological processes had been widely at work, producing a large identity of treatment between the two cases under consideration, viz., the Genitive Singular and Nominative Plural.

It would have strengthened, as well as illustrated, his position, if he had been aware of similar phenomena outside the strictly classic area, if he had shown how, in this matter, Gaelic both gives light to, and receives light from, the classic languages of Greece and Rome.

We have, therefore, a very probable theory of the formation of the Genitive Singular and Nominative Plural in Gaelic, viz., by *hyperthesis* of *ι*, as the remnant of a primitive ending in *ι*, in which both cases had originally agreed. It is a theory further corroborated by the mode in which the Comparative in Gaelic has been developed, which presents illustrative features of an interesting and instructive kind. The process of Comparison which is possessed *in common* by the two classic tongues, produces, as you know, in the one tongue the ending *ων*, and in the other the ending *ior*, whence we may look on *γλυκίων* as the equivalent philologically of *dulcior*. Now how has Gaelic done? It has as is usual with it, allowed the end syllable to drop, just as *equus* loses the *us* and appears as *each*, but it retains the vital part of the comparative ending, the *ι*; only it inserts it a stage earlier than is usual in the classic tongues, whence

*Lag* (faint)      *Laige* (for *Lag-ia*, fainter).

*Buan* (lasting) *Buaine* (more lasting).

That is to say, *hyperthesis* of *ι* has taken place here also. Has it ever done so in the classic tongues themselves in the comparative? It has, very clearly, in several instances—

*ἀμείν-ων* is for *ἀμειν-ίων*,

*μειζ-ων*      „      *μεγ-ίων*,

precisely as has happened in *Laige* above.

Returning from this digression, as to the Comparative, back to the Genitive Singular, there is a fact regarding this case to which, as I conceive, great interest attaches.

It is well-known that there is a close connection between the Genitive case and Possessive Adjectives, or, as Donaldson expresses it in his *Cratylus* (p. 474):—

"A great number of possessive adjectives are nothing more

than genitive cases attracted by juxta-position into a variety of inflexions."

The formation of such adjectives is frequently nothing more than the affixing of *s* as the Nominative Personal sign to a Genitive, and an adjective is at once developed. The most instructive example of this is the Greek Possessive Adjective, *δημόσιος*, which is formed from *δημόσιον*—the oldest edition of the Genitive *δήμου*—by adding to it the personal ending of Nom. Masc., viz., *s*. The corresponding Genitive ending in Sanskrit is *asya*, but if it were not for such an adjective as *δημόσιος*, we should be unable to prove, on Greek evidence, that there was anything so fully parallel to the Sanskrit Gen. in *asya*. For the order of development is—

1. Gen. *δημόσιον*,
2. „ *δήμου*, by dropping the spirant *s*,
3. „ *δήμου*, by absorption of *i*,
- 4, and finally, *δήμου*, by the ordinary contraction, the current Genitive.

Is there anything producible from Gaelic of a similar kind? Any instance of a Genitive which is convertible into a possessive adjective or *vice versa*?

We are at once reminded of the large class of nouns in Gaelic that take the Genitive in *ach*, and that Genitive is convertible at once into an adjective.

*Lasair* (a light), Gen. *Lasrach* (of a light), Adj. *Lasrach* (shining, blazing).

The addition of *s* is not needed, as Gaelic does not employ that as a personal ending of the Nominative. Hence the identity is actually more exact in Gaelic than in the classic tongues.

We had occasion to refer to the Genitive ending\* in Sanskrit *asya* with its correlatives in Greek, *οσιο*, *οιο*, as well as *ος* and the Latin Genitive *is*. What may this Proteus be? The probability, almost certainty, is that it contains some submerged preposition, now doing duty as an affix, and that when a Brahmin says *devasya*, and an old Greek said *θεόσιο* or *θεοιο*, he meant *deity—out of—what* (dev-as-ya), or, *what—comes—out—of deity* (= a deity's = divine) and so performed the intellectual feat of expressing a Possessive or Origination Case. Now the *ya*† of *asya* is referable

\* "The Genitive affix is very likely to have been at the first like many Genitive affixes of later date in the history of the Indo-European languages, one properly forming a derivative adjective." (Whitney's Language, p. 272.)

† Schleicher (Compend., p. 554) accepts this analysis of the *ya* as being pronominal, but he proposes to consider *s* as also from a pronominal root, which is not so natural as the above suggested analysis.

to the Sanskrit relative pronoun (*yas*, *yâ*, *yam*), and so there remains *as* on our hands. It is remarkable that it is to the Celtic area we must come to explain this; that the preposition which we suppose to be latent in this Genitive ending, should have been best preserved, not in India or in Greece, but among the hills of Wales and Scotland. As the Gaelic preposition for *out of*, and *as*\* the Welsh one, signifying the same, appear to be the oldest existing form in which we can detect the wide-spread suffix of the Genitive.†

These are some gleanings in the field of grammar. They are enough to give the hope that there is a deal more to gather, with proper eyes and with careful hands. Questions there are on every hand of a very tempting kind, hints of much suggestiveness, Ariadne-threads that will wind and wind in the explorer's hand, till with patience he ransack the labyrinth and come forth laden with pearls and golden ore. What, for example, if it should turn out that the Celtic tongue keeps the key to a great many other philologic treasures besides the genesis of the *asya* Genitive. What if it should one day be proved that the most common of our Saxon and classic suffixes are explicable from Gaelic, and from Gaelic alone? There is considerable evidence accumulating in that direction. I can only glance at it, and commend it to you as a subject of investigation.

I refer to such a suffix as *er* of the personal agent in such words as *painter*, *maker*, *railer*, *joiner*, *sailor*. There is no satisfactory genesis of this suffix, no mode of accounting for it, unless we fall back upon the Gaelic *fear* (a man), and suppose the *er* to be a descendant of that ancient word. It is true the Gaelic prefixes as well as affixes that word; we have *Fearlagh* for *lawyer*, but we have also *Eaglaisear* for *churchman*, literally *churcher*, and if *Eaglaisear* is explained by Gaelic Grammarians (Munro, p. 164) as *Eaglais-fhear*, with the *f* aspirated, and therefore no more sounded, so it seems fair to adopt this as the explanation of the wide-spread suffix of the personal agent.

\* Here Welsh *as* usual takes the side of the Greek, for it greceses in vowel, like the Greek genitive in *oc*.

† Edwards (*Recherches sur les Langues Celtiques*, p. 19) has called attention to this resemblance of *oc* in Greek Genitives to the Celtic preposition, and he adds also the remarkable analogy in the genesis of the Dative case. He finds at work, in the formation of Datives, the Welsh *i* and *yn*, signifying *to*, *into*, *for*, precisely the meanings attached to the Dative, and thus accounts for the remarkable predominance of that vowel (*i*) in the formation of that case in all the Aryan tongues. Here again the Celtic comes to the rescue in preserv-

Or again, though this is more doubtful, the *alis* so current in Latin as in *mortalis* and *capitalis*,\* bears a strong *primâ facie* resemblance to *amhuil*, signifying *like*, of the Gaelic. If *Bardail* (poetic) in Gaelic is analysed (Munro, p. 171) as *Bard-amhuil* (Bard-like), it suggests inquiry whether *mortalis* may not be similarly *mort-amhuil* (death-like).

Or again, the beautiful ending *orus* of such Latin words as *canorus*, *sonorus*, may be best explicable as the residuum of the adjective familiar to English ears in *claymore*, MacCallum *More*, and the like. Just as in Gaelic *luach* (worth or value), when combined with *mor* (great) becomes, with aspiration of the latter word, first *luachmhor* and then *luachar* (precious) or as *lianmhor* (abundant) is fused down through *lian'or* into *lian'ar* (Munro, pp. 29 and 171), we may suppose *son-orus* to be *son-mhor-us*, and ultimately *son-or-us*.

If so, this would throw light on the similar reduction of *Fear* to the residuum formerly discussed, as indeed both phenomena would throw light on each other.

The only other suffix I shall mention is the interesting and wide-spread verbal suffix of which *n* is the chief constituent, appearing in such words as *redden*, *whiten*, *widen*, &c., and in Greek verbs similarly—

*ἐρυθρ-αίνω*      *λευκ-αίνω*      *εὐρύνω*.

What is the origin of this suffix? It is widely diffused in English and widely diffused in Greek. Can the English, or, for that matter, the Greek, supply out of its own store a feasible explanation. No, neither of them can furnish a rational account of it, and, until we are better informed, the Professor of English and the Professor of Greek must come to ask the Gaelic oracle and inquire what it has to reply. The genius of Celtic will answer that it is the residuum of her ancient verb for to *do* or *make*, viz., *dean*, which when aspirated becomes *dhean*, sounded *yen*, and then abbreviated to *en* (Munro, p. 173). In such mode, and to such an extent, does Gaelic offer powerful solvents, enabling us to break down into primitive integers, easy of interpretation, the tangled complexity of human speech.

The only other point on which I shall enlarge at present is one that concerns the Gaelic numerals. The features I am about to bring missing links and binding again the *disjecta membra* of primeval speech over a wide area of the world.

\* Curtius (II., p. 54) divides *quâlis* as *quâ-li-s*, which would contradict the notion of *amhuil* suggested above.

point out constitute a remarkable group of facts, and mark a hoary antiquity as belonging to the Gaelic tongue.

The ordinal numerals are treated there in a remarkable way, with primitive ending very largely preserved.

We may premise that the process of developing the ordinal numerals in the Indo-Germanic tongues was by affixing to the stem of the cardinal the superlative ending *tama* or *thama*—with Nominative personal ending *tamas* or *thamas*—same ending as is found in Latin in *timus*, *ultimus*, &c. This ending *tamas* or *thamas* was sometimes abbreviated to *tas*, appearing in Greek as *τος* of such as *τέταρτος* and in Latin as *tus* of *quar-tus*. The original *m* of *tamas* has been severely handled even by Sanskrit, and in Greek it has vanished from the ordinals everywhere, with the exception of one, viz., *ἑβδομος*.

The state of the case will be best seen by running over the first ten ordinals in these tongues :—

| SANSKRIT.  | GREEK.   | LATIN.   | GAELIC.    |
|------------|----------|----------|------------|
| prāthamās  | πρῶτος   | primus   | ceud       |
| dvitīyas   | δεύτερος | secundus | dara       |
| tritīyas   | τρίτος   | tertius  | triagh     |
| chāturthas | τέταρτος | quartus  | ceathramh  |
| panchāmas  | πέμπτος  | quintus  | coigeamh   |
| shashtas   | ἕκτος    | sextus   | seathamh   |
| saptāmas   | ἑβδομος  | septimus | seachdamh  |
| ashtāmas   | ὀγδοος   | octavus  | ochdamh    |
| navāmas    | ἐννατος  | nonus    | naoidheamh |
| daçāmas    | δέκατος  | decimus  | deicheamh  |

That is to say, Sanskrit has shown a tendency to which the Greek succumbed, to adopt the abbreviated *thas* or *tas* in two of these, and the modification *tīyas* in other two, leaving thus six out of the ten with the proper superlative ending in *tamas*. The Latin has it clearly preserved only in three out of the ten, for it adopts the same abbreviation as the Greek in three of them, and introduces peculiarities into four of them. The Gaelic bears clear traces of the proper formation in no less than eight out of the ten, so that the proportions are in this matter—

Greek retains of primitive feature, 10 per cent.

|          |   |   |    |   |
|----------|---|---|----|---|
| Latin    | " | " | 30 | " |
| Sanskrit | " | " | 60 | " |
| Gaelic   | " | " | 80 | " |

Therefore the ending *amh* of Gaelic ordinals possesses the

highest interest to the philologist. It is true it has lost the termination *as*, and has become aspirated in consequence, just as *ibus* of Latin Dative Plural comes out as *ibh* in Gaelic, so that *amas* : *amh* : : *ibus* : *ibh*; and it has lost the primitive *t* of *tamas* everywhere, except perhaps in the 6th and 9th ordinals, for the *d* in the 7th and 8th belongs to the stem and not to the formative. Still this is only what has happened in Sanskrit itself where the *t* has, in most instances, similarly fallen away.

The second ordinal of the Gaelic possesses a peculiar interest of another kind, at least to the Greek scholar. It seems to be the Greek *δευτερος* under Celtic laws, for it was a Celtic feature to drop a *τ* between two vowels, and so, just as *pater* and *mater* have been Celticised into the French *pere* and *mere*, we may form the proportion—

|              |    |                  |
|--------------|----|------------------|
| FRENCH.      |    | GAELIC.          |
| pater : pere | :: | δευτερος : dara. |

In dealing with the Numerals I may here mention (and it is the last philological observation with which I shall trouble you) a fact of peculiar interest, not previously remarked upon philologically by any observer within my knowledge, one that throws a remarkable light on the immense antiquity of the Gaelic tongue.

I allude to the circumstance that in the Gaelic and indeed the Celtic speech generally, the progression in counting the higher numerals from 20 on to 100 and beyond, proceeds not by *tens* but by *scores* \* or by twenties, and apparently there is in existence now, no other machinery. The number 50 is in Gaelic 10 over two twenties, the number 60 is three twenties; the number 70 is 10 over three twenties, and so on.† Now it is a curious illustration of this mode of Celtic numeration that to this day the French tongue retains two ‡ of the Celtic steps in the progression; the French for *Eighty* and *Ninety*, is *quatre vingt* and *quatre vingt dix* exactly as the Gaelic *ceithir fichead* (=four twenties), and as *deich is ceithir fichead* (ten and four twenties),—in geologic phrase, a cropping up of primitive Celtic rock even under a Latin soil.

That is no doubt interesting, but the real interest lies here, in the scale itself. Whence came it? How did it originate? We can all understand the scale in savage life of Five; the *πεντάζειν* of Proteus in the Fourth Odyssey is a primitive feature, showing

\* Similarly in Basque the progression is by *Scores*.

† So in Welsh, 70 = *deg a thri ugain*; 80 = *pedwar ugain* &c.

‡ A third example might be cited, as partially on celtic lines. The French for *Seventy* is *soixante dix* (properly, sixty and ten).

